

*K. Feltham (O)*

THE

928

BEAUTIES

OF

Dwen Felltham;

SELECTED

FROM HIS RESOLVES,

*Published in the year 1661.*



BY J. VINE.



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## PREFACE.

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*IN perusing Owen Felltham's Resolves, a work published in the year 1661, and long since consigned to neglect, if not to oblivion, I have discovered truths, not only of the first importance, but also of an uncommon degree of beauty. They are, it must be confessed, in many instances, spun out to too great a length, and are also much encumbered with quaint ideas and obsolete expressions. It has been the amusement of a few leisure hours to collect the most instructive*

*W*

*structive as well as beautiful passages, and by bringing them into a more modern and compendious form, to endeavor to render them more useful. I have been induced to offer them to the public from the pleasure and satisfaction I have myself derived from them; and I think to many, particularly to youthful readers, they may, if attended to, prove an invaluable treasure.*

CON-

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THE  
BEAUTIES  
OF  
OWEN FELLTHAM.

ON  
REPREHENSION.

---

TO reprehend properly is the most difficult as well as the most needful office of true friendship; for who is it that will not sometimes merit reproof? And who can endure it? Yet how can a friend give greater proof of his regard than in preventing danger before its birth; or in  
B bring-

bringing a man to safety who is on the road to ruin?—When thou chidest a wandering friend do it secretly, in season, and with affection; the presence of a multitude will sometimes induce a man to make an unjust defence, rather than fall in a just shame: The public will often judge by the dregs of actions, with which they will strive to sully an honest fame;—private rebukes are for friends, when the witnesses of the offender's blushes are blind, and deaf and dumb. To admonish a man in the height of his passion is to call a soldier to council in the heat of a battle. He that will hear nothing  
in

in his anger, will, after a pause, enquire of you ; if you seem to forget him, he will the sooner remember himself. The end of passion is often the beginning of repentance ; when a word seasonably given, will sometimes, like a rudder, steer a man quite another course. If ever flattery were lawful, it must be so in palliating the bitterness of reprehension. To be plain argues honesty ; but to be pleasing, by gently administering truth, argues discretion, and is the way of wisdom : Let the offender always see affection without arrogance. Who blows out a candle with too strong a breath,

offends with the vapour, and lights it up again.—Let the man who gives advice guard against apparent superiority: If humility be accompanied with affection, the bluster of self-defence will soon subside into gratitude; if a friend must be lost, the best way to lose him is by seeking kindly to save him. Let me practise this, and I can then only be hated for my goodness, and against this poison I shall prove my own antidote.



ON  
THE USE OF PLEASURE.

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THE wisdom of Demosthenes was admirable in the answer he returned to the Corinthian Lais, " I would not buy repentance at so dear a rate." Surely pleasure is lawful, and God at first did ordain it for use, and if we take it as it was provided for us, we take it without a sting; but when in the measure or manner we exceed, we sully the pure stream.—As every dishonest action is but an earnest laid down

for grief, so vice is the infallible fore-runner of wretchedness ; on the best conditions it brings repentance and torment too.

I like those pleasures that are legitimated by the bounty of heaven, after which no fancied goblin upbraids the sense for using them : Such may be dreamt over and not disturb my sleep ; the use of them is like taking off the parching of the summer sun by bathing in a pure and chrystal fountain ; while unlawful pleasures, though they look fair and attractive, carry a venomous quality with them.

A wise

A wise man will not venture on that for present enjoyment, which will inevitably involve him in future pain and suffering.—Whatever we do, we ought first to examine the sequel or end; if that be good, our pleasures will be crowned with ease and content; but to rush on any delight that must end in sadness, suits not the prudence of a sound mind; it is but over-rating pleasure to undervalue vexation, and like a beast to be caught in the snare by dint of appetite.

ON  
HUMILITY.

---

HE that would build to last should lay his foundation low; even the conversation of a man is tottering, if it be not founded on humility.

—The proud man, like the early shoots of a new-felled coppice, thrusts out full of sap, green in leaves and fresh in colour; but bruises and breaks with every wind, and being top-heavy, is wholly unfit for use: Whereas the humble  
man



man retains it in the root, can abide the winter's chilling blasts, the rushing concussions of the wind, and can endure far more than that which appears so flourishing. Like the pyramid he hath a large foundation, whereby his height may be more eminent; and still the higher he is the lesser doth he draw at the top, as if the nearer heaven the smaller he must appear; and indeed the nigher man approacheth to celestials, the more he doth consider God, and sees the more to make himself vile in his own esteem.

Humility

Humility ever dwells with men of noble minds; it is a flower that prospers not in lean and barren soils, but in a ground that is rich it flourishes and is beautiful.

Moses was a divine lawgiver, a statesman, historian, and philosopher; as a valiant general he led Israel out of Egypt; he was endowed with the power of miracles; he was, as Ecclesiasticus tells us, beloved of God and men; yet was he meek above all that were upon the face of the earth.—We are commanded by our Saviour to learn humility of Him, that we may find  
its

its benefit in rest to our souls.—  
We are sent to the ant for industry, to the lion for valour, to the dove for innocence, to the serpent for wisdom; but for humility unto God himself.

What is that man the worse who lets his inferior go before him? the folly is in him who takes what is not his due; but the prudence rests with him who, in the sereneness of his own worth, does not value it : The Sun chides not the Morning Star, though it presume to usher in the day before him.

Humility

Humility prevents disturbance, it rocks debate asleep, and keeps men in continued peace.—I had rather be accounted too humble than a little proud : Even in gold the stiffest is the basest; but the purest is the most ductile.

HOW



## HOW HE MUST LIVE THAT WOULD LIVE WELL.

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WHOEVER neglects his duty to God, to his neighbour, or to himself, halts in something that should make life commendable ; for ourselves we need order, for our neighbour charity, and for our God reverence and humility ; and these are so linked one to another, that he who lives orderly cannot but be acceptable both to God and the world.—Did every man preserve a life of order,  
what

what harmony would exist in kingdoms, in cities, in families! To maintain this how needful is charity! Without charity a man cannot even be truly sociable.—If there be any thing sweet in humanity, it is in the intercourse of beloved society, where every one is each other's counsellor, mine, and solace. Such a life as this I take to be best pleasing both to God and man; nor yet can this be truly pleasant, unless a man be careful to give to God the honor that is due to him: When a man shall perform this threefold duty, he shall find a peace within that shall fit him for whatever befalls him.—

He

He shall not fear himself, for he knows his course is order ; he shall not fear the world, for he knows he has done nothing to offend it ; he shall have humble hope of heaven, for he knows he shall there find the favor of a servant and of a son.—

Let me live thus, and I care not though the world slight my innocence.

ON  
FAME.

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IT seems strange that man should be excited by the desire of a noble fame and memory after his death, when the account must pass upon his actions, and not upon the report of others. Virtue were a kind of misery if Fame only were all the garland that crowned her. Glory alone would be a reward incompetent for the toils of industrious man : This follows him but on earth ; in  
heaven



heaven is laid up a more noble, more essential recompence : Yet in others I will honor the fame, where deserving deeds have given birth to it—in myself, I will regard those actions that may merit it. I will not for itself seek it, though I shall be glad if it may follow me, to excite others, that they may go beyond me. If I can but tread the path that leads to it, I shall, on my own account, be content.—Check thyself, vain man, that with the ardor of a diseased fancy dost pursue fleeting shadows ! Love substances, and hear what Boëtius tells thee :

c

He

He that seeks a glorious prize,  
Thinking that the top of all,  
Let him view th' expanded skies,  
And the earth's contracted ball;  
Then blush to think that glory's plan  
Is bounded by the breath of man.

ON  
 THE CHRISTIAN'S  
 SETTLEDNESS IN GOD.

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**THOUGH** man circuit about with ever so many ambiguous turnings, yet like a disunited element he is never at quiet repose till he makes up to the centre of his soul, his God. All things that put him out of the quest of heaven are but interposures, diversions, and disturbances. Tho' the pleasures, profits, and honors of this world may sometimes shuffle

him out of his usual course, yet he wavers up and down in trouble, and is never at rest till he returns to his wonted joy and inward happiness : there it is that his centre points, and there his circle is bounded ; in God, as in the root, are the causes of all felicity.—All the oriental lustre of the richest gems, all the enchanting beauties of exterior shape, the exquisite of all forms, the loveliness of colour, the harmony of sound, the heat and clarity of the enlivening sun, the heroic virtue of the bravest minds, with the purity and quickness of the highest intellect, are all emanations from the Supreme Deity.



Deity.—If we find any thing in the creature that is but faintly amiable, we may be sure in God to find it in immense perfection——Absalom's beauty, Jonathan's love, David's valour, Solomon's wisdom, the prudence of Augustus, the eloquence of Cicero, with whatsoever else we most admire, the purity of virgins, the innocence of wisdom, and the intelligence of all.

Is it not wonderful that the brittle, weak, and short-lived pleasures of this world should captivate the soul, which, as fire flies upward, is naturally formed to ascend to beati-

tude in its great Creator?—A full delight in earthly things argues a neglect of heavenly. If I trust to the former, I may surely suspect myself of a confidence where there is no stability.

THE

## THE VIRTUOUS MAN IS A WONDER.

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THAT fire must be of an unusual composition that is made to burn in water, and so must his temper be that can remain unsullied, and retain its brightness, though encompassed with corruption's waves.—

When the handsome courtesan Theodata vaunted to Socrates how much she was to be esteemed before him, because she could gain many proselytes from him, but he none from her, he replied, that it was no won-

der, for she led them down the easy and descending road of vice, while he compelled them to the thorny and ascending path of virtue.—

Virtue dwells at the head of the river, to which we cannot get but by rowing against the current: He that walks through a large field hath only a narrow path to guide him right in the way; but on either side there is wide room to wander in:

What latitude can bound a prophane wit, or a lascivious fancy?—

The loose tongue hazards all, while the virtuous man sets a watch on his lips, and examines all his language ere it passes.

Every



Every virtue hath two vices that close her up in curious limits, and if she swerve ever so little she steps into error :—Religion hath superstition and prophaneness—Fortitude fear and rashness—Liberality, avarice and prodigality—Justice, rigor and partiality—and so in others ; which has occasioned some to define virtue to be a medium between two extremes.—Virtue is in truth a war, wherein a man must be perpetual centinel—'Tis an obelisk, which though founded in the earth, hath a spire which reaches to heaven—like the palm-tree, though it hath pleasant fruit it is hard to come at

at it, for the stem is not easy to climb.

Though surrounded with difficulties, the virtuous man hath a star within, that guides, and shoots its rays of comfort : He hath found the true philosopher's stone, that can unalchymy the alloy of life, and by a certain celestial process can turn all the brass of this world into gold.

**THAT**

## THAT WE ARE GOVERNED BY A POWER ABOVE US.

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THAT which we either desire or fear, I observe, doth seldom happen, but something that we think not of doth for the most part intervene; or if that fall out which we expect, it is not till we have given over the search; as if God, in general, would teach that we are not wise enough to chuse for ourselves, and would therefore lead us to a dependence on him.—Though God give not  
our

our desires, yet he always imparts what is best for us.—How infinitely should we entangle ourselves if we could sit down and obtain our wishes, and this because we ignorantly follow the body, and the blinded appetite, which regard only the shell or outside; whereas God respecteth the soul, and distributeth his favors accordingly.—Surely God will work alone, and man must not be of his counsel. Nothing brings destruction on him sooner than when he presumes to part the empire with God. If we are but patient, God will be profitable; but the time and means we must leave to



to him, at the same time our active endeavors must not sleep.—Do thy part with industry, and let Providence point the event. I have seen matters fall out so unexpectedly, as to endeavor to learn this lesson from them—Never to despair, because I have a God; and never to presume, because I am but a man.

IT

**IT IS DIFFICULT TO BE  
RICH AND GOOD.**

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IT is rare to see a rich man religious, for religion preaches restraint, and riches prompt to uncontrouled liberty; when wealth abounds men buy out their penance, and put off those considerations that should make them serious. The education of rich men teaches them to command, and prevents their being acquainted with obedience, which is better than sacrifice. The solaces of this life, if too much indulged in,  
seldom

seldom allow a man to think of a better.——Agur prayed directly against plenty, and though Solomon was so wise as not to ask it, yet we see when he had it, it had well nigh eaten out all his wisdom.

Riches are not evil in themselves, yet for the most part there is a casual illness that attends them; and if our Saviour had not seen something in them more than we apprehend, he would never have declared it so difficult for a man at once to be both good and opulent; neither would he have advised the young man to sell all that he had, or com-  
manded

manded his disciples to leave all and follow him; nor would he, in his own condition, have set us an example of poverty, if he had not known human frailty too apt to be drawn away by abundance. Add to this, the danger of being flattered into a reliance on riches, and their preventing a sense of charity; for not feeling the wants of others, we cannot be sensible of what they endure, so that the charity of the rich is often rather self-love than charity; which it must be, if in the exercise of it a man neither looks to God, nor to the object of distress, but to his own vain glory.—If we have  
not



not wealth, it is noble not to covet it, and if we have it, it is surely so to do good with it, not from ostentation, but from truly upright and religious motives ; for then will man be blessed in his abundance, when others share the bounty and the benefits which Providence hath made him steward of.

**SPIRITUAL THINGS ARE BETTER  
AND TEMPORAL THINGS  
WORSE THAN THEY SEEM.**

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**EVERY** man would arrive at joy and contentment, but the way is known to few. We mistake the nature of what we grasp at: All earthly delights are sweeter in expectation than enjoyment—all spiritual pleasures more in fruition than expectation; the former are seen through a perspective glass, which makes them seem greater, clearer,

clearer, and nigher at hand; for the latter we turn the glass about, and give a narrowing figure to all those fair proportions that offer themselves to the eye; we believe them less, and more remote from us: thus the sense obscures things that are spiritual and heavenly, but reveals and augments what are temporal.

Whatsoever temporal felicity we contemplate, we are apt to single out the promised pleasure, and to overlook the pain and trouble; like Time, it appears with flowing hair and attractive comeliness, but be-

hind is pilled and bald.—A man who hath not experienced the delights of genuine piety, nor the sweetness of spiritual influence, will hardly believe that such satisfactions are treasured up in godliness; they are the foretaste of the joys hereafter. Let no man, therefore, be discouraged at the sober and unassuming aspect which piety wears, nor captivated by the splendid triumphs of worldly happiness: Both will change, and though we may be deceived in both, we shall be sure to be cheated but in one.



ON THE  
WORSHIP OF ADMIRATION.

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WHATSOEVER is rare and excellent, carries the soul to the thought of eternity, and, by contemplation, gives it some glimpse of more absolute perfection than here it is capable of.—When I see the most enchanting beauties that earth can shew me, I yet think there is something far more glorious, far beyond the frailty of a face, the delightful strains of a sweet-toned

D 3                      voice,

voice, added to the melody of the artful instrument, and surpassing the energies of the most sublime eloquence; and this leads me to believe that contemplative admiration forms a considerable part of the worship of the Deity. It is an adoration purely of the spirit, a more sublime bowing of the soul to God; and this will lead a man to real happiness, if to his contemplation he join a constant imitation of God, in justice, wisdom, and holiness: Nothing can carry a man so near to heaven as this. Meditation is the soul's perspective glass, whereby in her distant remove she discerneth God.

God. But we have bodies as well as souls, and even this world, while we are in it, ought in some degree to be cared for. As those states flourish most where execution keeps pace with good counsel, so does man, when contemplation is seconded by action.—Contemplation generates what action diffuses; without the last the first is abortive, without the first the last is defective.—St. Barnard compares contemplation to Rachel, who was the more fair; but action to Leah, who was the more fruitful.—I would not always be busy, nor totally secluded in thought; yet that which some

call idleness I will esteem the sweetest part of my life. Surely the varieties of created beings were formed for the inward soul as well as for the outward senses.—He was a true philosopher, who being asked how he could endure life without the pleasure of books, answered, the works of creation were his library, wherein, when he pleased, he could muse upon God's deep oracles.



ON  
CONTENTMENT.

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IT is no fault to strive to better our condition. God hath given to man an active mind, which is ever climbing to more perfection. Perfection is set in the heights, and though man cannot reach it, yet should he ever draw nearer to it, by industriously persevering in the rising way. We cannot be too covetous of goodness, and may well labor for greater attainments. By fair means, and for good ends, it is also

also lawful, no doubt, to encrease our temporal wealth, if we do but sustain our lot cheerfully, patiently, and thankfully. There is no absolute contentment here below; whatsoever was created was created to some end, and till it arrive at that, it cannot be fully at rest: God is the end to which the soul tends, and till it is set free from earthly elements, it cannot, but through a glass darkly, approach to such purity and such glory. When it is united to God, who is the source of all true happiness, it may be calm, and pleased, and tranquil; till then its highest state is a mixed felicity.

I would

I would be so content with what I have, as ever to think the present best; but then I would think it best but for the present.—The soul that with but half an eye sees God, can never be satisfied till it enjoy a more complete vision.

ON  
OSTENTATION.

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HE that boasteth, if he be not ignorant is at least inconsiderate, and knows little of the casualties which man is exposed to ; if he had intrinsic worth, he would rather wait till the world had found it, than impatiently proclaim it; it is more true satisfaction for a man to know himself honest than for all the world to approve him so. Virtue is built upon herself, and we disgrace her work when we go about to seduce the voice of approbation.

Phocion



Phocion called bragging Laosthenes the cypress tree, which makes a fair shew, but seldom bears any fruit. He that does good for applause only, fails of the right end, since to be truly virtuous is to be so for virtue's sake. To act well is as much applause as a good man labors for. When a soldier boasted too much of a scar in his forehead, he was asked by Augustus if he did not get it when he looked back in flight.—To neglect fame is far more noble than to beg it.—We do but undervalue goodness, when, slighting her inward approbation, we seek the uncertain warrant of men.

ON

ON  
THE FOLLY OF SIN.

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THE difference between a wise man and a fool is, that the wise man begins in the end, and the fool ends in the beginning.—The end of sin is sorrow and misery, which the wise man seeing avoids the snare. It was the fool that said, there is no God; yet he could not seriously think it, though he might be glad if it were so: He could no more believe that a soul was wanting to the vast universe, than a spirit to actuate

ate his own body. 'Tis evident with what ease and pleasure the mind disposes and commands every motion, member, muscle, and nerve of man's wonderful frame: Surely we may conceive that the infinite and incomprehensible Spirit can as easily dispose and order every particle of what may seem accident in the vast surrounding world, and must conclude, of course, that the great Soul of all must be infinitely wise, infinitely good, omnipresent, and omnipotent; and if God be such as sense, and reason, and religion teach, can there be a greater folly than to counteract his laws, which

which are the laws of order and of happiness.—Sin can no more be without folly than water without moisture : It is folly that opens the door, lets it into the heart, and retains it there. 'Tis so deep a folly as to set a man against himself.—Nature teaches to all things animate self-preservation ; but the sinner is more careless than the beast of the field.—Sin debilitates us in the practice of good : it hides itself in the blackness of the night, and if there remain the least desire of advancing towards heaven, like a chain about a prisoner's leg, it pulls us back, and keeps us still in slavery.



ry.—It is the fool that utters slander, that sports in mischief, that rages and is confident, that despiseth instruction, though from a father's love. It is the fool's lip that enters into contention; it is the fool that folds his hands in sloth, that trusteth in his own frail heart, and that makes a mock at sin.

Seneca says admirably of himself, "Though I were sure men could never know it, and that God would certainly pardon it, yet I would not intentionally commit a sin, on account of the baseness and dishonesty of the sin itself."—He is

E

happy

happy who can wean himself from the world's allurements; but if his lot be cast amidst its profits, pleasures, and honors, let him live therein as the bee does in honey; who, though the hive be ever so full, yet with it never entangles his wings.

ON

## POLICY IN FRIENDSHIP.

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**POLICY** in friendship is like logic in truth, a kind of crafty wisdom that turneth every thing to self-profit.—Give me a friend who is virtuously wise, not cunningly hid.—Scipio would not believe it was the counsel of a wise man, which taught so to love as if we were soon to hate.—The purpose of true affection is perpetuity: That friendship which is soon at an end was never well begun.—The politic heart is

too full of angles and devices for a plain and honest character to meddle with—The end of policy is for a man to make himself great: the end of true friendship is to promote the interest and well-being of another.—The perfection of love is constancy, and of friendship disinterestedness.



ON  
CURIOSITY IN KNOWLEDGE.

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THE delight of some men seems to be to puzzle the soul, and to dazzle the mind's dim sight. In matters whereof we may be certain, it is well worth the labor to be instructed; but in religion itself, where reason is at a loss, I will be content to retire with admiration.—Much may be gained by studious enquiry, while that which remains is as a sea, which is too deep for the confined powers of the human mind to  
E 3                      fathom.

fathom.—One will tell us of our Saviour's disputations among the doctors, and another what became of the body of Moses : The schools have made more questions than they have decided, leading us by nearer approaches to a sun that blinds us. The husbandman who looks not beyond the plough and the scythe, is in much more quiet than the divided mind of the sceptic. Why should we rack our brains for unprofitable discoveries? Since, tho' we cannot know how much is hid, we may profit by what is discovered.

IT

IT IS BEST INCREASING BY  
LITTLE AT ONCE.

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ATTENTION and diligence are the best steps whereby to climb to excellence. The heavens send not down their rains in floods, but by drops and gently distilling dews.— A man is neither good, nor wise, nor rich at once; yet by gradually advancing, he may every day better his prospect, and reach nearer to the summit.—To-day he learns a virtue, and to-morrow he condemns a vice. An hour in a day will much

profit a man in his study, if well employed : He that from every thing collects something shall in time get a treasury of wisdom.— It is for God by his omnipotence to do mighty things in a moment ; but gradually to become wise and good, is the course he hath left for man.— To acquire any thing truly worthy is a double task : We must first remove impediments, and next derive the advantage, and this with perpetual vigilance, without which all good things will recede and fall away ; The progress of our attainments is the recompence that sweetens the toil.—Practice grows into habit,



habit, and constitutes perpetuity.—

I will never expect to be perfect at once, but will every day labor to do something that may mend me. If I can keep vice under, and win upon that which is good, though it be but a little at once, I may come to be better in time.

ON  
DIVINATION.

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WHY should man so much covet to bring to light the hidden things of futurity? If we rightly consider, we shall find it a wise and merciful Providence that has covered these things in shade.—Were we certain of future pain and suffering for years to come, we should anticipate them in the agitations of a troubled soul: Were we sure of future prosperity and joy, the present state would grow insipid.—Surely God hath  
made

made man to dwell in doubt, that he might be awed into goodness, and into a dependence on his providence. We are led by Hope to the end that is appointed for us; and by a way apparently uncertain we arrive at that which we could neither know nor avoid. Our merciful and wise Creator hath thus, by an invisible and wonderful order, guarded us from impatience at the certainty of good, and from being too much terrified at the approach of evil.—How wonderfully is man disposed, by restless anxiety, to hazard his happiness! The best way to secure it is to live well; by so doing

doing we shall be sure of a prosperous end, though the way be rugged. He that lives virtuously, will die prepared for a better state.—

Virtue and Vice are both prophets, the one of certain good, the other of pain or penitence.

IT



IT IS NEITHER A GREAT ESTATE,  
NOR GREAT HONORS, THAT  
CAN RENDER A MAN TRULY  
HAPPY.

---

THERE may, perhaps, be a pleasing  
and enticing splendor in a vast estate,  
or some high seat of honor, to view  
them only from the first glance of  
the towering fancy; yet if we exa-  
mine the true and most essential fe-  
licities of man, we shall find that it  
is not wealth nor power, nor a great  
estate, nor great command that can  
render us in ourselves more happy  
than

than other men; all that we are capable of here must be of benefit to the mind or to the body. For the mind, surely kings have not found so much content as mean philosophers ; their fears, their hopes, their joys, their griefs, their loves, their hatreds, with all their varied passions, are more distracting and more torturing than those that wait upon an obscurer man, who, without making a noise, can steal unheeded through the world's confusion.—He that commands the most enjoys himself the least ; his inclination is a continual fretfulness. Forced one way and pulled another,  
who

who is it can guess at those incessant cares that go to bed with princes? The delicacy of great persons is like the tenderness of nice plants, which are more subject to destruction, and more sensible of injury, than such as through habituated custom, are hardened to endure the frost, the heat, and the vicissitudes of the seasons.

If retirement were not more delicious than affluence and popularity, philosophers would not have sought it as the happiest part of their life : they steel themselves into a calm, and cultivate that true  
wis-

wisdom which proceeds from piety and innocence, and which the thorns of authority and worldly care prevent the growth of.

Certainly the greatest pleasure the mind is capable of in this life is in the contemplation of God and nature, the sweetness of philosophy, and the discourse of reason.—The pleasures of luxury soon pall upon the sense, like continual feasting, and destroy the keenness of appetite, which, with simple fare may be enjoyed in the purity of health.—Temperance gives a relish to enjoyment, which it heightens beyond the reach



reach of art.—The temperate man,  
 like fish in chrystal streams, un-  
 tainted with disease, smoothly glides  
 through the soft current of life.—  
 A great estate, without a mind still  
 greater, is a snare.

ON  
NEGLECT.

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**THERE** is the same difference between diligence and neglect, as between a garden curiously kept and the sluggard's field : The one is cloathed with beauty, the other with deformity.

Negligence is the rust of the soul, which corrodes through all her best resolutions ; we need only to sit still, and diseases will arise for want of exercise. How fair soever  
the

the soul may be while enveloped with a frail body, it requires continual care and vigilance to prevent its being soiled and discoloured.—

Our life is a warfare, and if we sleep without a centinel, we may be taken by surprize. The mounds of virtue, as well as those of pastures, will decay; and if we do not repair them, all the beasts of the field may enter, and tear up the growth of goodness. With the well-disposed, but a slight deviation from Wisdom's laws may disturb the mind's fair peace.—Macarius did penance for only killing a gnat in anger. Like the jewish

touch of things unclean, the least misconduct requires purification.—Man is like a watch; if he be not every day wound up with prayer and circumspection, he is unprofitable and false, and serves but to mislead. If an instrument be not truly set, it will be harsh and out of tune—a single string disordered and the diapason dies.—Surely without an union with God, we cannot be secure or well! Can he be happy who from happiness is divided? To be united with God we must be influenced by his goodness, and continually strive to imitate his perfections.

Dili-



Diligence preserves and gathers,  
while neglect, like death, is the  
dissolution of all. The industrious  
bee, by his sedulity in summer, lives  
on honey all the winter, while the  
drone is not only cast out, but  
beaten and punished.

ON  
INJURY.

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WERE right and justice preserved with exactness, earth would be a heaven to live in, and the life of man like that of angels. No croud-ed throngs would fill our law tribunals, nor armed troops devastate our fruitful fields. Every injury is a petty war, inwardly tending to some degree of murther or theft, therefore a breach of God's commandments; and though, perhaps, it may seem to prosper a little while,  
till

till the wheel of Providence has performed its round, yet doubtless it is short-lived, and drags its own punishment after it. There are two parts of a christian's life—to shun wrong, and to do what is right; and these form one great united precept,—“eschew evil and do good.” Even natural light reveals the blackness of wrong, and that religion shines but dimly that does not discover it. They wound religion to the quick that, slighting its practice, shew it to the world with adulterated spots. The pagan tribunal is preferable to some christian conventions that have appeared in

the world. A true christian dares not offer wrong. Religion from above is pure and peaceable ; but injustice and wrong are the fuel of war, and in the end we shall find them a warfare against ourselves. He that can allow himself to do injury, makes his favors to be suspected as snares.—What are formalities of religion, if a man's life bring a scandal on what he professes? The commission of one wrong wants a thousand more to protect it : Injury by injury is defended ; we commit the greater to maintain the less : one falshood begets another, till generations succeed.—A rebel hardens his



his own heart, engageth his friends,  
oppresseth his fellows, involves his  
relations, murders the loyal, and  
like a torrent lets in all that can  
tend to confusion : and what is the  
condition of man, when both tables  
of the commandments are erased  
from his heart?

**ADVERSITY IS OFTEN TO BE  
PREFERRED TO PROSPERITY.**

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**VIRTUE** hath interior majesty and excellence, and is not only beautiful but eternal. It hath an attractive power beyond all the transient and superficial pleasures of life.——

The soul of man, like a tree in a fruitful soil, was at first planted in the garden of virtue, and while it is nourished there, it spreads and thrives with fruit and liveliest verdure; but every vice is a worm, or frost, or blight, that checks the sap,  
nips

nips the tender bud, and cankers the stem itself. Doubtless there is an eternal justice of which God gives us the sense and idea, that when man hereafter shall find a punishment for his sins, he cannot plead the want of warning ; since it is more than whispered to his spirit within him, and so characterized in his very soul, that it is one of the distinctive properties of man from beast, that he can reflect upon himself, and apprehend eternity. There is, therefore, good in affliction, and the consequences of it, since it brings man to deep reflection.—Virtue is not learned perfectly

fectly without a severe tutor : 'Tis the fire of affliction that rescues us from our dross ; the faithful hereby learn all their virtues, patience, charity, temperance, fortitude, humility, resignation and contentment : By this God forms his servants into splendor ; he cleanses them from their rust, washes away their stains, consumes their dregs, and builds them up into saints ; and it is surely a mark of favor to be bred up thus like princes, under the tuition of so wise an instructor in the rudiments of piety and goodness. We are the objects of our heavenly Father's care, while we are lessoned in the arts



arts of virtue, and checked and impaled from offence. The soldier is not expert without passing thro' several perils. Iron is forged and anvilled, is brought to the vice and filed into shape and brightness, and then, but not before, it is fit to take its gilding. He that is so headstrong as to slight discipline, may soon be brought to hold even virtue in contempt.

MAN

**MAN OUGHT TO BE  
EXTENSIVELY GOOD.**

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THE first act God requires of a convert is to be fruitful. The religious man's goodness lies not hid in himself alone: He is still strengthening his weaker brother: good works and good instructions are the generative acts of the soul, out of which spring new posterity to the church and gospel. To be the means of bringing more to heaven is the inseparable desire of a soul that is in a right state: Vir-  
tue

tue is distributive, and had rather sacrifice self to make others happy, than bury benefits that a multitude might profit by.—I doubt whether he will ever find the way to heaven, who desires to go thither alone ; all heavenly hearts are charitable ; enlightened souls cannot but diffuse their rays.—I will, if I can, do something for others and heaven, not to merit by it, but to express my gratitude : Though I cannot do what I would, I will labor to do what I can.

ON  
ARROGANCE.

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**PRIDE** is not to be found in a noble nature, nor humility in an unworthy mind: Virtue dwells with honor, and pride with constant baseness.—True honor, like a noble virgin, must be won by courtesy.—He that has little to recommend him, would invade men's good opinions by vainly assuming what he has no right to: a lofty look and carriage are the property of low minds.—Arrogance is a weed that  
grows



grows on a dunghill, and thrives by the rankness of the soil. The approbation of the wise will be ever bestowed on humility, which values not its own merit, but lives on the delight of doing good.—Of trees God hath chosen the vine, that clings for support; of beasts, the innocent and patient lamb; of fowls, the mild and gentle dove.—When God appeared to Moses, it was not in the lofty cedar nor the sturdy oak, nor the spreading plane, but in an humble abject bush; as if he would, by these elections, check the conceited arrogance of man: Nothing procureth love like humility,

or hatred like pride.—To be humble to our superiors is duty, to our equals courtesy, and to our inferiors nobleness; which with all its lowliness, carries a sway that sweetly commands the soul; it can only by forsaking virtue dwindle into baseness.—The divine justice seems most to vindicate itself upon the presumptuous, and more especially to combat against pride.

ON  
THE TRIAL OF FAITH AND  
FRIENDSHIP.

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FAITH and Friendship are seldom truly tried but by extremes : To find friends when we have no need of them, and to want them when we have, are both alike easy and common. When we are happy in the spring-tide of abundance, and the rising flood of plenty, then the world will be our servant ; but when these pleasing waters are at ebb, men grow shy, and look upon

us at a distance. Adversity is like Penelope's night, which undoes what the day had wove.—Our fortunes and ourselves are things so closely linked that we cannot always tell which of the two procures us the most regard; but when a separation takes place, the secret is discovered.—He is happy who finds a true friend in extremity; but he is happier who findeth not extremity, whereby to try his friend.—The trial of friendship is by finding what others will do for us; but the trial of faith is by proving how we will act towards God.—To trust in Providence when we have the securities  
in



in our iron chest is easy; but to depend upon God for what we cannot see is more difficult, and far more acceptable! for in this act we make confession, and acknowledge the Deity.—Those who are like Peter in their boasting, will be like him in their base denial; but few will resemble him in their quick repentance. Under the pressure of severe calamity, we must either quit our hold of God or of ourselves, and then shall we see to which our souls will cleave the strongest. Of this trial, excellent is the use which we may make. If we find our faith, upon the test, firm, it will be to us  
a per-

a perpetual banquet ; if we find it wavering, knowing our weakness, we shall implore divine aid to sinew it with a stronger nerve ; so that the severity of the trial may prove either the assurance of our happiness, or our guide to find it.

Without this confidence in a power that is always able to aid us, we do but wander in trouble and doubt. Infidelity is often the cause of all our woes, and the ground of our erring into sin. Not trusting in God, we disturb ourselves with fears and solitudes, and to cure these we rush into prohibited paths.

Can

Can God suffer those to want, who with a dutiful endeavor depend on his goodness? It is not usual for man to act thus; and will Infinite Power, who grasps the universe in his hand, leave a faithful follower destitute of this world's comforts? Can the Deity be sparing of his bounty to his sons, unless he sees it for their benefit?—Serve God and believe, and he will never fail thee for what is most convenient.

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